

Amendments to the Claims

Please cancel Claims 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 11, 14, 16, 17, 19, 21, 23. Please amend Claims 3, 4, 8, 12, 13, 15, 18, 20, 22, 24, 25, 28-31. Please add new Claims 32-35. The Claim Listing below will replace all prior versions of the claims in the application:

Claim Listing

1. (Cancelled)
2. (Cancelled)
3. (Currently Amended) ~~The method of Claim 2, wherein said ester is~~ A method for treating a cytokine-mediated inflammatory condition in a patient suffering therefrom, comprising:
administering to said patient an effective amount of a composition comprising an ester of an alpha-ketoalkanoic acid selected from the group consisting of alpha-ketopropionic acid (pyruvate), alpha-keto-butyrate, alpha-ketopentanoate, alpha-keto-3-methyl-butyrate, alpha-keto-4-methyl-pentanoate or alpha-keto-hexanoate in a pharmaceutically acceptable inert carrier substance,
wherein the condition is selected from the group consisting of rheumatoid spondylitis, osteoarthritis, gouty arthritis, endotoxic shock, cerebral malaria, silicosis, pulmonary sarcoidosis, bone resorption disease, graft versus host disease, allograft rejections, fever and myalgia due to infection, AIDS related complex (ARC), Crohn's disease, rheumatoid arthritis, cachexia and septic shock.
4. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim [[2]] 3, wherein said ester is an ester of pyruvic acid.
5. (Cancelled)

6. (Cancelled)
7. (Cancelled)
8. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim [[1]] 3, wherein said carrier further includes a biologically safe component for inducing and stabilizing enolization of the alpha-keto functionality of said ester at physiological pH values.
9. (Original) The method of Claim 8, wherein said component for inducing and stabilizing enolization of the alpha-keto functionality of said ester is an inorganic, divalent cation.
10. (Original) The method of Claim 9, wherein said divalent cation is calcium or magnesium.
11. (Cancelled)
12. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim [[9]] 3, wherein
said alpha-ketoalkanoic acid ester is ethyl pyruvate, and wherein
~~said divalent cation is~~ the composition further includes calcium, and
said inert carrier substance is Ringer's solution in a pH range of 7-8.
13. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim [[1]] 3, wherein said inert carrier is a Ringer's solution of isotonic saline supplemented with potassium ion.
14. (Cancelled)
15. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim [[1]] 3, wherein said ester of an alpha-ketoalkanoic acid compound is admixed in a saline solution, said solution containing a cation selected from the group consisting of calcium and magnesium.
16. (Cancelled)

17. (Cancelled)
18. (Currently Amended) ~~The method of Claim 16,~~ A method for treating a cytokine-mediated inflammatory condition in a patient suffering therefrom, comprising:
administering to said patient an effective amount of a composition comprising an ester of an acid wherein the compound of Formula (I) is selected from the group consisting of an ester of alpha-keto-propionic acid (pyruvate), alpha-keto-butyrate, an ester of alpha-ketopentanoate, an ester of alpha-keto-3-methyl-butyrate, an ester of alpha-keto-4-methyl-pentanoate and an ester of alpha-keto-hexanoate in a pharmaceutically acceptable inert carrier.
19. (Cancelled)
20. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim ~~[[16]]~~ 34 wherein ~~[[R₂]]~~ the ester is an ethyl ester.
21. (Cancelled)
22. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim ~~[[19]]~~ 34 wherein the ~~compound~~ ester is ethyl pyruvate.
23. (Cancelled)
24. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim ~~[[19]]~~ 34, wherein said composition is administered up to 24 hours after onset of said inflammatory condition.
25. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim ~~[[19]]~~ 34, wherein said carrier further comprises a biologically safe component for inducing and stabilizing enolization of the alpha-keto functionality of said acid at physiological pH values.

26. (Original) The method of Claim 25, wherein said component for inducing and stabilizing enolization of the alpha-keto functionality of said ester is an inorganic, divalent cation.
27. (Original) The method of Claim 26, wherein said divalent cation is calcium or magnesium.
28. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim ~~[[19]]~~ 34, wherein said inert carrier is Ringer's solution in a pH range of 7-8.
29. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim ~~[[19]]~~ 34, wherein said inert carrier is a Ringer's solution of isotonic saline supplemented with potassium ion.
30. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim ~~[[19]]~~ 34, wherein the ester compound of Formula (I) is admixed in a saline solution, said solution containing a cation selected from the group consisting of calcium and magnesium.
31. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim ~~[[19]]~~ 34, wherein said inflammatory condition is inflammatory bowel disease, rheumatoid arthritis, asthma, sepsis or septic shock.
32. (New) A method for treating a cytokine-mediated inflammatory condition in a patient suffering therefrom, said method comprising:
 - administering to said patient an effective amount of a composition comprising ethyl pyruvate in a pharmaceutically acceptable inert carrier substance,
 - wherein the condition is selected from the group consisting of rheumatoid spondylitis, osteoarthritis, gouty arthritis, endotoxic shock, cerebral malaria, silicosis, pulmonary sarcoidosis, bone resorption disease, graft versus host disease, allograft rejections, fever and myalgia due to infection, AIDS related complex (ARC), Crohn's disease, rheumatoid arthritis, cachexia and septic shock .

33. (New) A method for treating a cytokine-mediated inflammatory condition in a patient suffering therefrom, comprising:
- administering to said patient an effective amount of a composition consisting essentially of an ester of an acid selected from the group consisting of ketopropionic acid (pyruvate), alpha-keto-butyrate, alpha-ketopentanoate, alpha-keto-3-methyl-butyrate, alpha-keto-4-methyl-pentanoate and alpha-keto-hexanoate, and, optionally, pharmaceutically safe organic or inorganic cations in a pharmaceutically acceptable inert carrier.
34. (New) A method for treating a cytokine-mediated inflammatory condition in a patient suffering therefrom, comprising:
- orally, intranasally, subcutaneously, intramuscularly, intravenously, intralumenally or intra-arterially administering to said patient an effective amount of a composition comprising an ester of an acid selected from the group consisting of ketopropionic acid (pyruvate), alpha-keto-butyrate, alpha-ketopentanoate, alpha-keto-3-methyl-butyrate, alpha-keto-4-methyl-pentanoate and alpha-keto-hexanoate, and, optionally, pharmaceutically safe organic or inorganic cations in a pharmaceutically acceptable inert carrier.
35. (New) A method for treating a cytokine-mediated inflammatory condition in a patient suffering therefrom, comprising:
- administering to said patient an effective amount of a composition consisting essentially of ethyl pyruvate in a pharmaceutically acceptable inert carrier.